



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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J. TYLER McCAULEY
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

December 26, 2001

TO: Audit Committee

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **SUNSET REVIEW FOR THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE
COUNTY'S ARBORETA AND BOTANIC GARDENS**

RECOMMENDATION

The Audit Committee recommend to the Board of Supervisors (Board) that the Board of Governors of the County Arboreta and Botanic Gardens (Board of Governors) be disbanded.

BACKGROUND

The Board of Governors of the County Arboreta and Botanic Gardens was established by Board order under Chapter 2.26 of the Los Angeles County Code. The Board of Governors' mission is to advise and provide support to the Board of Supervisors and the Director of Parks and Recreation (DPR) in the management of the County's Arboreta and Botanic Gardens (County Arboretum, South Coast Botanic Gardens, Descanso Gardens, and Virginia Robinson Gardens).

The Board of Governors should consist of fifteen members, three nominated by each Supervisor. Currently, there are three vacancies, which have existed for over four years. Meetings are required to be held bi-monthly and members serve without compensation.

JUSTIFICATION

Based on our review of meeting minutes and interviews with DPR managers, the Board of Governors has not provided the County with any significant benefits during the last three years. At each meeting, the members receive a tour of one of the facilities. Then, each facility manager provides an update on their facility's activities. The Board of Governors provides very little input at these meetings. During the evaluation period, neither the Board of Supervisors nor DPR asked the Board of Governors for any advice or requested any special studies. The Board of Governors' self-evaluation lists only one

accomplishment related to providing advice during the last three years. This was a recommendation to waive fees at the Arboreta and Botanic Gardens on Veteran's Day.

The Board of Governors is required to meet six times a year. However, during the last three years, the Board only met fifteen times. Average attendance has been six of the fifteen members per meeting. Due to low attendance, the Board of Governors did not meet between June 8, 2000 and February 13, 2001. In addition, due to low attendance and the lack of business to conduct, the Board of Governors wants to reduce the number of meetings to four times a year.

DPR estimates that it incurs approximately \$5,000 in expenses a year for Board of Governors' activities. This includes staff time to attend meetings, prepare agendas and transcribe minutes; services and supplies; and mileage reimbursements. Since the Board of Governors has not provided the County with any significant benefits, we recommend that it be disbanded. DPR management concurs with this recommendation.

Please call me if you have any questions, or contact DeWitt Roberts at (213) 974-0319.

JTM:DR:JS
Attachments

c: Michael H. Smith, Interim Director, DPR
Olene Ewell-White, Assistant Director, DPR
James Larson, Chair, Board of Governors
Khahn Nguyen, Manager, Commission Services

COMMISSION SUNSET REVIEW
BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE COUNTY
ARBORETA AND BOTANIC GARDENS
REVIEW COMMENTS

Mission. (Does the mission statement agree with the Board of Supervisors' purpose and expectations?)

The mission is as set forth in the ordinance creating the Commission; to advise the Board of Supervisors and provide support for the general management of the County's Arboreta and Botanic Gardens. **CONCUR**

Section 1. Relevancy. (Is the mission still relevant and in agreement with the Board of Supervisors' purpose and expectations?)

While the mission is still relevant, the Board of Governors does not advise the Board or Department of Parks and Recreation regarding the management of the County's Arboreta and Botanic Gardens. **NOT RELEVANT**

Section 2. Meetings and Attendance. (Are required meetings held and is attendance satisfactory?)

The Board of Governors is required to meet at least bi-monthly. It held 15 out of the required 18 meetings during the last three years. While the Board held most of the scheduled meetings, average attendance has been six of fifteen members per meeting. In addition, due to low member interest, the Board of Governors did not hold any meetings between June 8, 2000 and February 13, 2001.
UNSATISFACTORY

Sections 3 and 4. Accomplishments and Results. (Are listed accomplishments and results significant?)

The Board of Governors' self-evaluation identified only one accomplishment during the last three years related to advising the Board on Arboreta and Botanic Gardens management. This recommendation was to waive fees on Veteran's Day. **NOT SIGNIFICANT**

Section 5. Objectives. (Are the objectives compatible with the mission and goals and relevant within the current County environment?)

The stated objective of formalizing an action plan to become "a more active voice of advocacy" (as indicated in the self-evaluation) is compatible with the mission and goals of the Board of Governors. However, based on the accomplishments reported by the Board of Governors, the Board of Governors has not provided any significant benefits.

Section 6. Resources. (Are the resources utilized by the entity in support of the entity's activities warranted in terms of the accomplishments and results?)

Since there are no material accomplishments and results, the use of approximately \$5,000 in resources a year is **NOT WARRANTED**

Section 7. Recommendation:

THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE COUNTY ARBORETA AND BOTANIC GARDENS BE DISBANDED.

**BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE LOS ANGELES
COUNTY ARBORETA & BOTANIC GARDENS
ATTENDANCE RECORD**

Commissioner	Appointed By	9/30/1998	12/31/1998	3/31/1999	6/30/1999	9/30/1999	12/31/1999	3/31/2000	6/30/2000	9/30/2000	12/31/2000	3/31/2001	6/30/2001	Totals	% Attend
Number of Meetings per Quarter		1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	0	0	1	2	15	
Ms. Marilyn C. Stoke	Molina	0	2	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	8	53%
Vacant	Molina													0	0%
Vacant	Molina													0	0%
Vacant	Burke													0	0%
Ms. Eglantine Payne	Burke	1	1	1	1	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	2	10	67%
Dr. Emma D. McFarlin	Burke	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	7%
Mr. James E. Larson	Yaroslavsky	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	1	1	8	53%
Mr. Rhett Beavers, ASLA	Yaroslavsky	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	9	60%
Ms. Elaine R. Gerdau	Yaroslavsky	1	1	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	7	47%
Mrs. Julianne Heinsheimer	Dana	0	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	0	0	1	2	11	73%
Mr. Bradley J. Boyajian	Dana	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0			3	25%
Ms. Jeanne B. Jones	Knabe									0	0	1	1	2	67%
Ms. Jane Au	Knabe	1	1	1	1	1	2	0	2	0	0	0	1	10	67%
Mr. Frank Tzu Hsu Lin	Antonovich									0	0	0	0	0	0%
Mrs. Alyce R. Williamson	Antonovich	0	2	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	8	53%
Ms. Gail Boatwright	Antonovich	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	11	73%
Totals		6	12	8	12	6	10	6	11	0	0	6	11	88	

Average Attendance per Meeting -----> **5.9**